

Message Text

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67

ACTION NEA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1791

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2451

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, IS

SUBJ: RESETTLEMENT OF KUNEITRA

REF: DAMASCUS 2246

1. SYRIAN LIAISON OFFICER FOR UNDOF CAPTAIN NIZAR SHAQRA CONDUCTED TOUR OF NORTHERN SEPARATION AREA FOR AMBASSADOR AND EMBASSY PERSONNEL OCTOBER 20. TERRITORY COVERED INCLUDED SEVERAL OF VILLAGES VISITED BY GERMAN CHARGE (SEE REFTEL). OUR VISIT CONFIRMED EARLIER REPORTS THAT CIVILIAN POPULATION IN EVIDENCE ALL VILLAGES SEEN.

2. IN DISCUSSING SETTLEMENT OF KUNEITRA TOWN, SHAQRA SAID THAT SARG HAD FORBIDDEN RETURN OF KUNEITRA
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RESIDENTS UNTIL THE ISRAEL MINEFIELDS IN IMMEDIATE

VICINITY OF TOWN HAD BEEN FULLY CLEARED. THIRTEEN PEOPLE AND MANY FIELD ANIMALS HAD BEEN KILLED BY MINES WHEN FIRST KUNEITRANS CAME HOME IMMEDIATELY AFTER SIGNING OF DIS-ENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT. SHAQRA STATED THIS CLEARING OPERATION NOT POSSIBLE WITHOUT ENTRY LARGE NUMBER OF SYRIAN MILITARY PERSONNEL TO AREA AND THIS FORBIDDEN UNDER DIS-ENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT. FURTHERMORE, SHAQRA ADDED, WHEN SARG SOUGHT ISRAELI PERMISSION THROUGH UNDOF FOR MINE CLEARING, ISRAELI AUTHORITIES IMPOSED, AS PRIOR CONDITION, REMOVAL OF SYRIAN MORTARS FROM 0 TO 20 KMS ZONES EAST OF LINE B.

3. SHAQRA COMMENTED THAT IN NEGOTIATING DIS-ENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT ISRAELIS APPARENTLY OVERLOOKED QUESTION OF MORTARS IN CONTEXT OF ARMAMENTS PERMITTED IN ZONE. AS FAR AS SARG CONCERNED IT HAS NO INTENTIONS OF MOVING MORTARS WHICH, ALTHOUGH OF RELATIVELY SHORT RANGE, POSSESS HIGH ACCURACY. HE SAID DAMASCUS POSITION WAS THAT WHAT WAS NOT FORBIDDEN IN TERMS OF ARMAMENTS WAS PERMITTED.

4. COMMENT: THE LINKAGE OF MINES AND MORTARS ALLEGEDLY BLOCKING KUNEITRA RESETTLEMENT PRESUMABLY FIGURES IN UNDOF RECORDS. TO VISIT KUNEITRA NOW REQUIRES PRIOR NOTICE THROUGH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY OR ESCORT INTO THIS MILITARY ZONE BY SYRIAN UNDOF LIAISON OFFICER SUCH AS CAPTAIN SHAQRA. SARG FOR ITS OWN PURPOSES REMAINS ANXIOUS TO ENCOURAGE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF SUCH VISITS. A TOUR OF THE RUBBLE WHICH WAS ONCE A TOWN OF 50,000 IS UNDENIABLY GOOD, STOMACH-TURNING PROPAGANDA. MURPHY

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